



Representative
Tom Petri
Reports
to The Sixth District

6TH DISTRICT OFFICES

WASHINGTON
 2462 Rayburn Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515
 (202) 225-2476

FOND DU LAC
 490 West Rolling Meadows Dr., Suite B
 Fond du Lac, WI 54937
 (920) 922-1180
 Toll-free 1-800-242-4883

OSHKOSH
 115 Washington Avenue
 Oshkosh, WI 54901
 (920) 231-6333

Bright Outlook for Wisconsin

BY REPRESENTATIVE TOM PETRI



President Reagan used to say that when your neighbor is out of work, it's called a "recession," but when you are out of work, that's a "depression." Unfortunately, for many in manufacturing the recession has been a depression for far too long.

Government feels the squeeze as well. The federal surplus is gone for now – by one estimate 66 percent of the loss is due to the recession, 20 percent to increased spending, and 14 percent to tax cuts.

Everybody in Wisconsin knows that our state budget is on the chopping block, and local governments will have to make painful adjustments.

Traveling around central Wisconsin, however, I'm detecting a new sense of optimism. While some businesses are still laying people off, others are hiring. Some people tell me that orders are rising after several difficult months – especially the month following September 11th, when uncertainty reached its peak.

Everybody expects strong growth to return. The only question is whether the recovery has already started or is still getting organized.

The long term outlook couldn't be better, however. The exponential growth of computer power, the amazing medical and industrial developments just now starting to be delivered by biotech companies, and many other rapid scientific advances all promise to power America's economy forward once the current correction plays itself out.

While we may not think of central Wisconsin as the home base of the nation's high tech industries, our businesses will prosper through the application of new, productivity-enhancing tools and advanced materials. And renewed growth will restore government revenues and take pressure off budgets at every level.

What is Congress doing to move things along? Last summer we approved the President's tax relief package which put hundreds of dollars into the hands of families just when the economy needed an extra jolt of consumer spending.

According to a report recently released by the Council of Economic Advisers, the tax cuts will have helped create 800,000 more jobs than there otherwise would have been by the end of 2002. The report also concludes that tax relief has provided a powerful economic stimulus, has softened the recession and has laid the

foundation for long term economic growth.

The summer's tax package focused on helping families, but in the fall we turned to a follow-up stimulus bill designed to encourage businesses to invest, grow and hire. So far, the House has approved stimulus bills on three different occasions.

The first was highly controversial, and the Senate's leaders refused to let it come to the floor for a vote. The second was designed to satisfy critics' objections, but it, too, failed to get a hearing in the Senate. The third was approved just recently, and it remains to be seen whether the Senate will consider it.

Of course, uncertainty following the September 11th attacks became a major threat to the economy. In this case, the President and Congress spoke with one confident voice and approved the measures necessary to strengthen our defenses against renewed attack and to carry the war to the staging areas of the terrorists themselves.

When the Enron scandal broke, Congress and the Administration moved quickly to investigate and to develop safeguards to protect employees and investors from businesses which use unethical and illegal practices to conceal their true financial conditions.

Our economy cannot function efficiently if employees and investors cannot rely on clear

and honest accounting. The majority in Congress understands this, and will approve strong reforms.

Finally, education continues to be a necessary pillar for economic growth. Although improvements in education can't power us out of a short term slump, they are vital for the long term health of the economy. Accordingly, I am proud of my long service as a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Late last year we won passage of the President's "No Child Left Behind" education reform bill, which gives local educators greater ability to direct federal aid in accordance with local priorities. In return for this greater flexibility, the nation's schools will be required to demonstrate that their pupils are mastering their lessons. Failing schools will be identified and targeted for special attention.

Then, early this year, Congress and the President locked in record low interest rates to make student loan borrowing costs as low as possible at least through 2006.

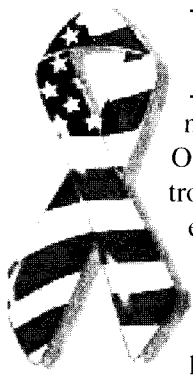
For all these reasons, I am confident about our economic future. Nobody has repealed the business cycle, but just as the economy slumps at times, it also grows. We are already seeing signs of recovery, and I'm optimistic that the coming expansion will be long and strong.



In a December event, the independent taxpayers' watchdog and pro-environment group Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) named Rep. Petri a Treasury Guardian for his votes on bills and amendments in the House during the 2000 legislative session. Rep. Petri was found to have voted in defense of the taxpayers 79 percent of the time.

Come to Rep. Petri's Town Meetings! See page 4.

FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE



I have some problems with President Bush's proposal to add \$48 billion to the defense budget next year. When you're at war, Job One should be winning it – and the troops in the field deserve all the equipment they need to get the job done. But, as far as I've been able to tell so far, the \$48 billion increase – equal, for example, to 150 percent of France's *entire* annual military budget – includes everything but the proverbial kitchen sink, and demonstrates an unwillingness to establish priorities.

That said, I am very much in favor of the President's homeland security initiatives. When it comes to defending ourselves within our borders, we have a lot of work to do.

In his budget the President proposes \$3.5 billion

for the nation's "first responders" – police officers, firefighters and medical personnel. The funding will help pay for new equipment, training and overtime costs, based on what states, cities and counties agree they need in order to implement their anti-terrorism plans.

The President proposes \$11 billion for border security. This includes a significant increase for the Coast Guard and the U.S. Customs Service to keep unwanted goods – including drugs – from coming into the U.S. by land, sea or air. And it includes funding for the Immigration and Naturalization Service to develop a new entry-exit visa database and tracking system.

Nearly \$6 billion has been earmarked to defend against bioterrorism. This will help hospitals to become better able to respond to a bioterror emergency; boost research and development of new vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tests; and build

up our critical National Pharmaceutical Stockpile.

Under the plan \$700 million will go to improve intelligence-gathering and information-sharing. This money will not only help federal agencies to share information with each other, but also to develop ways that Washington can share information with states and cities so they can better determine how to use their resources.

And finally, \$230 million has been designated to create a Citizen Corps, which would operate a variety of programs to engage ordinary Americans in specific homeland security efforts in their own communities. Proposed initiatives include the creation of a Medical Reserve Corps, a Volunteers in Police Service program and a Terrorist Information and Prevention System program. The Citizen Corps would also seek to double the current Neighborhood Watch program and triple the Community Emergency Response Team program

Progress on Key Issues

Education: In early January President Bush signed the "No Child Left Behind" education reform bill into law. Put simply, along with more resources, this bill gives school districts more flexibility when meeting federal requirements.

In return, the new law establishes educational standards and accountability so that parents, teachers, and children themselves can have a better understanding of whether a school's students are actually learning. This will help to identify failing schools quickly in order to bring about change.

As Vice Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and as a member of the conference committee which negotiated a compromise between the House and Senate versions of the bill, I was pleased to play a significant role in the crafting of this reform.

Pension Reform: The collapse of the Enron Corporation has raised several important issues that Congress has already started exploring through a series of hearings.

The terrible situation in which many Enron

employees have found themselves clearly demonstrates how important it is that we help employees protect themselves from fraudulent, irresponsible, and to some extent even simply unsuccessful corporate managers.

As part of this effort, I recently helped to introduce the President's proposed Pension Security Act. This legislation includes new safeguards and options to help workers preserve and enhance their retirement security, and insists on greater accountability from companies and senior corporate executives during "blackout" periods when rank-and-file workers are unable to make changes to their retirement accounts.

Health Care: At a February 11th speech in Milwaukee, President Bush announced a \$117 billion proposal to make medical coverage more available and affordable while placing more control of health care decisions in the hands of patients.

Among many provisions, the President's proposal would expand Medical Savings Accounts by lowering the deductible requirements to levels that are increasingly common in private health plans to allow preventative care coverage. Medical Savings Accounts are tax free accounts some Americans are allowed to set up to protect themselves from high out-of-pocket expenses.

The President also proposed legislation to make it easier for small employers to pool together to offer their employees better and more affordable coverage options similar to those offered by large corporations.

Also, the President proposes new health care credits worth up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for families, which would be available to low- and middle-income families who lack employer subsidized insurance. The Administration is going to work with state governments to give people the option of using these health credits through state-sponsored purchasing pools to enable them to have access to a broad range of affordable coverage options.

The President has further proposals for improving Medicaid and Medicare, including prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

Agriculture: The current "Farm Bill," the major "catch all" farm plan for all the different commodity support and related programs will expire at the end of this year. Last October the House approved its version for extending the program, but will need to negotiate with the Senate over the final plan.

The House plan expands support programs for commodities, continues federal programs for products such as milk and sugar, and increases conservation programs for farmers – though not as much as most Wisconsin representatives advocated.

Conservation programs would help many of our medium-sized and smaller farms in Wisconsin more than many of the other parts of the bill. During consideration of the bill, the Midwest's representatives managed to prevent the continuation of the anti-competitive and anti-consumer Northeast Dairy Compact, so hopefully that's finally going to fall by the wayside.

Transportation: The Highways and Transit Subcommittee, where I am Chairman, has begun work on the major bill which readjusts ground transportation policy every six years and distributes billions of dollars for roads, transit, safety and related projects nationwide among the 50 states.

The chronic and worsening budget problems at Amtrak are also likely to require considerable attention from the Transportation Committee over the months ahead.

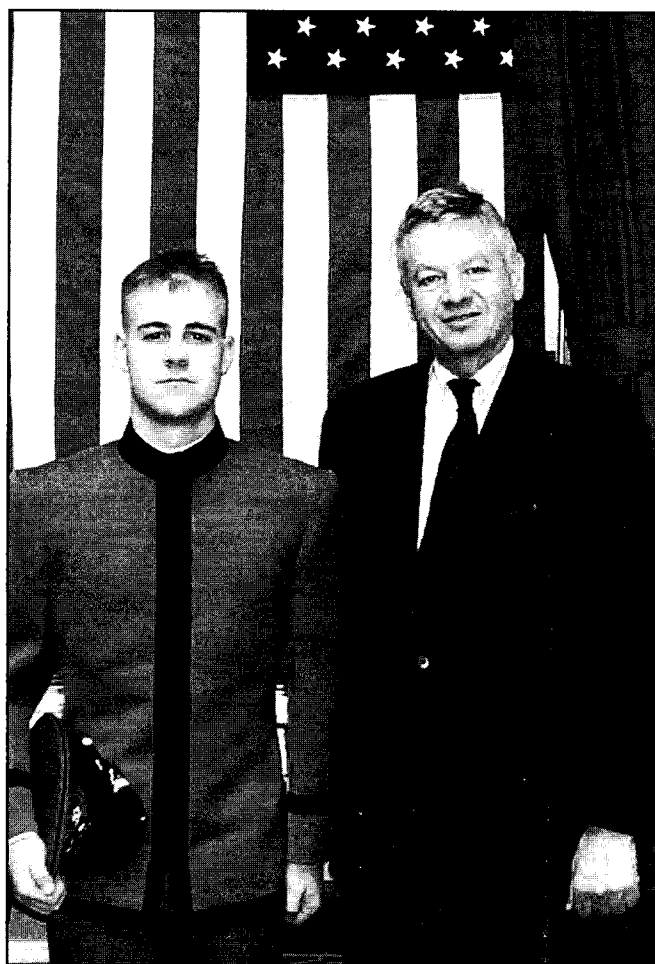
The committee will also continue its oversight of the implementation of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001 which I helped craft to strengthen security efforts in response to the September 11th attacks.

High School Students: Service Academies Want You!

It's not too early for high school juniors to start thinking about seeking appointment to the U.S. service academies – the Military Academy at West Point, NY; the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md.; the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo.; and the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY.

Nominations are based solely on the recommendations of an independent, bipartisan selection committee comprised of 6th District citizens. Those seeking nomination for the 2003-2004 school year should contact one of my offices listed in this newsletter. Also, information and computer links to the academies' web sites can be found in the Academy Page section of my web site located at:

www.house.gov/petri/academy.htm



Oshkosh resident and West Point Cadet Andrew Lerch visited Rep. Petri in December.

COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

My staff regularly responds to requests from constituents regarding a variety of topics relating to the federal government. Below are some examples of common questions.

Q — *I'm due a tax refund from the federal government and filed my tax return early. Where's my refund?*

A — The Internal Revenue Service maintains "TeleTax", an automated telephone system where you can check the status of your current year's return. The number is **1-800-829-4477**. Information is entered into the computer after your return is processed, usually 4-6 weeks after it is received depending on whether you file by mail or electronically.

To use this service, you need to have your tax return handy as you will have to provide your social security number, filing status, and the exact amount of the refund expected. You will be told whether or not your return has been processed and if it has, when your refund was sent to you. Additional pre-recorded messages on 150 tax topics are also available through TeleTax.

Q — *I'm planning a trip overseas. How do I get a passport?*

A — The Passport Agency has 15 facilities across the country that produce passports. Applications for first time passports must be made in person at authorized acceptance locations (those serving the Sixth District are listed below).

You will need proof of U.S. citizenship, proof of your identity and two passport photos. The normal fee for an adult passport good for ten years is \$60.

Processing time should be about six weeks. There are special requirements for children. Expired passports can usually be renewed by mail.

More information is available on the State Department website (www.travel.state.gov/passport_services), including travel warnings and advisories (especially useful post-September 11th), visa requirements of other governments and background information on other countries.

Appleton

320 S. Walnut
Outagamie Clerk of Courts

Chilton

206 Court Street
Calumet County Clerk of Court

Fond du Lac

City County Government Center
Fond du Lac County Clerk
of Circuit Court
160 S. Macy Street

Friendship

402 Main Street

Adams

County Clerk of Circuit Court

Green Lake

492 Hill Street
Green Lake County Clerk
of Circuit Court

Manitowoc

1202 Franklin Street
Manitowoc Main Post Office

Mauston

220 E. State Street
Juneau County Clerk of Courts

Oshkosh

415 Jackson Street
Winnebago County Clerk
of Circuit Court

Sheboygan

522 N. 9th Stree
USPS Passport Agent
Sheboygan Post Office

Sparta

112 S. Court Street
Monroe County Clerk of Courts

Waupaca

811 Harding Street
Waupaca County Clerk of Courts

Wautoma

209 S. St. Marie Street
Waushara County Clerk of Court

Q — *How do I get financial aid to attend college?*

A — The federal government has several major grant and loan programs to help students and their parents finance higher education. The same basic application is used for all of them and can be obtained by contacting the Department of Education at **1-800-433-3243** or by downloading from its website (www.ed.gov/studentaid).

In addition, the State of Wisconsin provides assistance to its residents through the Wisconsin Higher Educational Board (www.heah.state.wi.us). There are also many private sources of funding which require a little more work to identify.

Many libraries have directories that list some of the diverse private opportunities available to students majoring in certain subjects or belonging to specific organizations which sponsor scholarships. The Financial Aid Office of the school you plan to attend will also have information on assistance specific to that institution (alumna sponsored financial aid, for instance).

Q — *How do I obtain an American flag which has flown over the United States Capitol?*

A — Normally, the answer would be that Members of Congress sell (at cost) flags which have flown over the Capitol Building. However, in the aftermath of September 11, requests for flags have been so numerous that the House of Representatives has been unable to find a supplier to meet the additional demand.

There is currently a backlog of 37,000 flag orders and our supply people have no idea when flags will again be available. If you are interested in a flag, please understand that currently your request cannot

be filled. Feel free to check with my office in the future to see if the situation has changed.

Q — *My family is planning a trip to Washington, DC this spring? Can you arrange tours for us?*

A — Unfortunately, a few of the major tourist attractions in our nation's capital remain closed to tourists due to heightened security concerns.

The White House is only open to a limited number of school groups. There are no individual tours being conducted. Tours of the Federal Bureau of Investigation are canceled indefinitely. The Capitol has reopened but tours are limited to about 1,000 people a day. Passes for the House Gallery may still be obtained through my office. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (where our money is printed) recently resumed tours.

You will encounter increased security, and the resulting lines, at many locations. However, there is still much to visit in Washington. All of the monuments and the Smithsonian Institution's many facilities are open. Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington in nearby Virginia, is welcoming guests daily. The National Zoo is a wonderful place to take children overdosed on history. You can still stroll down the National Mall and enjoy springtime in Washington. It's a beautiful city.

Contact my office for current information on tours. Stop by my office in Room 2462 of the Rayburn House Office Building (across Independence Avenue from the Capitol) as I would be glad to visit with you if my schedule permits.

As always, feel free to call my office if you have any questions regarding the federal government.

Tax Accomplishments

It's that time of year again – when most of us face the annoying prospect of filling out our tax forms. But maybe you'll feel better after reviewing some of the tax changes enacted by Congress last summer.

▲ Across-the-Board Tax Rate Reductions: Taking the position that no one should send more than about one-third of their income to the IRS in taxes, Congress provided immediate tax relief through the reduction of individual income tax rates. This tax cut, along with others, came just in time to stimulate the economy and make the recession shorter and shallower.

▲ Marriage Penalty Reduction: This change reduced the unfair additional taxes that many working couples have found themselves paying after saying "I do." I've been working against the marriage penalty for at least a decade, and I'm quite happy that we've finally enacted this commonsense plan to strengthen families.

▲ Death Tax Repeal: No one should be forced to visit the undertaker and the IRS all in the same day. The gradual repeal of the death tax will lift an especially unfair burden from family farms and small businesses so that heirs can continue their family operations instead of having to sell out to pay the government.

▲ Doubling the Child Tax Credit to \$1,000: With this change, the Child Tax Credit rose from \$500 to \$600 per child. In 2005 it will be \$700, and finally \$1,000 in 2010.

▲ IRA Contribution Limit Increase: By significantly increasing the amount that Americans can set aside in Individual Retirement Accounts and 410(k)-type plans, Congress has modernized pension laws and provided regulatory relief to encourage more small businesses to offer retirement plans.

▲ \$2,000 Education Savings Accounts for K-12 and Private Education: This change allows parents to invest up to \$2,000 annually in ESAs (up from the old limit of \$500) and expands the accounts to cover not just the expenses of higher education, but also those associated with public, private, or home schooling of children in kindergarten through grade 12. The build-up of interest within such accounts is tax-free, and neither principal nor interest will be taxable upon withdrawal if parents use the money for legitimate educational expenses, such as tuition, tutoring, books, computer hardware or software.

▲ \$10,000 Adoption Tax Credit: This reform increases the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions and increases the employer adoption assistance exclusion to \$10,000.

Naturally, when it comes to taxes nothing is simple and I have provided only the briefest summaries to help point you in the right direction. To better understand qualifications and restrictions, be sure to read the IRS booklet which typically comes with your tax forms.

Also, while last summer's reforms will help a lot of people, including low-income workers, more needs to be done for poor families – particularly those families with at least one wage earner which, nevertheless, struggle to get by on low incomes.

Mail Problems in Congress

After deadly anthrax spores were found in congressional mail last October the delivery of mail to House and Senate offices in Washington was suspended for several weeks.

We are receiving mail again, but before it reaches us it is irradiated to kill any biological agents which might be enclosed. As a result, mail arriving in Congress tends to be crispy or brittle. Pages often stick together and have to be pulled apart. Plastic windows on window envelopes melt, and mailed photos melt into each other, turning into little plastic blocks.

Not only is congressional mail difficult to han-

dle, it's also very slow. Some arrives months late, and even the fastest mail gets held up while being treated.

For these reasons, the best way to reach me is by e-mail. Please use the form linked to the front page of my web site found at

www.house.gov/petri/

For those without access to e-mail, the telephone is another option. If you need to send documents, you may want to consider mailing them to the 6th Congressional District's office in Fond du Lac. Please find addresses and phone numbers at the top of the first page of this newsletter

Keeping in Touch

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call or write. In addition to the usual "old fashioned" addresses and numbers on page 1, you can contact me by e-mail. Due to the high volume of messages coming to my old e-mail address from all over the country, I am now asking everybody from the 6th District to use the form linked to the front page of my web site found at

www.house.gov/petri/

This form filters out "spam" e-mail, which can number in the hundreds or thousands on any given day. When writing by e-mail, please include your name and postal address to guarantee a response.

Also, for those who would like to hear from me more frequently, I put out an occasional e-mail newsletter discussing issues currently receiving attention in Congress. If you would like to be added to my e-mail distribution list, drop me a note via my web site as explained above.

Internships for College Students

Would you like to learn more about our federal government—especially how Congress really works? If so, you might consider an internship in my Washington office. Interns in my office are unpaid, but I cooperate with schools that are willing to offer credit for the experience. The work required is not complicated, but it is important and provides a chance to get a first hand look at Congress and government service.

For further information, check my web site at

www.house.gov/petri/intern.htm

Representative Tom Petri's April, 2002 TOWN MEETINGS SCHEDULED

Town Meetings Scheduled

During the 106th Congress I spent 234 days working in Wisconsin, held 56 Citizen Hours in 26 cities, hosted 42 Town Meetings in 18 locations, and made 574 stops in 87 cities and towns.

Citizen Hours provide an opportunity to meet one-on-one with individuals who need help with Social Security or veterans benefits, who want to ask for help getting into the U.S. Military Academies, who want privately to discuss problems with farm programs, with the Internal Revenue Service and the like, or who simply want to express opinions about issues of national concern. My most recent series of citizen hours was held in January at 14 locations, and there will be a new round later this year. As always, if it is more convenient for you or if your concerns are pressing, feel free to contact my Fond du Lac, Oshkosh or Washington offices.

Town Meetings, as opposed to Citizen Hours, provide opportunities to discuss national issues in a group setting. My latest round of town meetings will take place from April 1 through April 5 at 14 locations throughout central Wisconsin. Please come and express your opinions!

MONDAY, APRIL 1

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.—**FOND DU LAC**
City-County Government Center
160 South Macy Street
Legislative Chambers

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.—**OSHKOSH**
City Hall, 215 Church Avenue
Room 406

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.—**BERLIN**
City Hall, 108 North Capron Street
City Council Chambers

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.—**MANITOWOC**
Manitowoc Safety Building
910 Jay Street
Meeting/Training Room

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.—**PLYMOUTH**
City Hall, 128 Smith Street
City Council Chambers

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.—**NEW HOLSTEIN**
New Holstein Public Library
2115 Washington Street
Arps Room

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.—**ADAMS**
Adams County Library
101 South Main Street
Meeting Room

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 *continued*

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.—**WAUTOMA**
Waushara County Job Center
205 East Main Street
Conference Room

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.—**MONTELLO**
Marquette County Courthouse
77 West Park Street
County Board Room

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.—**CLINTONVILLE**
City Hall, 50 Tenth Street
Conference Room

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.—**KIMBERLY**
Village Hall, 515 Kimberly Avenue
Council Chambers

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.—**MENASHA**
City Hall, 140 Main Street
City Council Chambers

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.—**TOMAH**
Farmers & Merchants Bank
1001 Superior Avenue
Community Room (use rear entrance)

11:00 - 12:00 Noon—**MAUSTON**
Hatch Public Library
111 West State Street
Community Room